

Bad as she wants to be

Junior Stacy Sykora keeps teammates, opponents on toes

By JAMIE BURCH
Staff writer

Actor Jim Carey's on-screen antics and Chicago Bull Dennis Rodman's cutting edge fashion sense are yet another part of pop culture that you love to hate. What would happen if you combined the two and packaged them inside a multi-talented athlete?

The Texas A&M Volleyball Team knows the answer — junior outside hitter Stacy Sykora.

"Stacy is a combination of the two," senior outside hitter Kristie Smedsrud said. "I think her personality is just like Jim Carey's and she dresses just like Dennis Rodman. Stacy is one-of-a kind. I've never met anyone like her."

"She is very eccentric, but that's what makes her Stacy."

Sykora said every team, whether it be basketball or volleyball, needs a Dennis Rodman.

"Everybody would love to play like Michael Jordan," Sykora said. "But you have to have someone on your team who's a little different. Otherwise you wouldn't get along. You have to be a little different so people don't come to expect stuff. You have to do the unexpected and surprise them a few times to keep them on a straight line."

Surprising her teammates is what Sykora does

best. The versatile native of Burleson began the 1997 season by making the all-tournament team in the State Farm/NACWAA Volleyball Classic (Aug. 22-23) and capturing the tournament MVP at the Georgia Invitational.

The field in Palo Alto was comprised of the defending national champion University of Stanford, second ranked Penn State University and the eighth ranked Brigham Young University Cougars. Even with such stout competition, Sykora held match highs for kills and hitting percentage in the loss to Stanford.

"There are no signs the explosive start will end. Sykora spent the off season in the gym and focused solely on volleyball for the first time in her career. She added 15 pounds to her physique and the results speak for themselves."

"She has added a lot of strength over the last several months," Smedsrud said, "which in turn has boosted her confidence. Stacy is off to a great start. She's jumping higher and is quicker than she's ever been. I couldn't believe she could get any quicker."

"She's incredibly athletic. Her added confidence is helping every aspect of her game."

In addition to spending off season bulking up, Sykora participated in the USA National Team Trials in the spring. Sykora said that experience helped to give her a feel of where she is and where

she needs to be.

"It really helped me because in the volleyball world I had never gone against a gym full of All-Americans," Sykora said. "I never knew where I stood. I learned that I could hang with the big girls, but it also gave me a chance to gage where I'm at and what I needed to improve on."

And as good as Sykora has become, she said she still feels she can polish her game.

"I can improve 1000 percent," Sykora said. "My game is still rusty. Last year was a roller coaster. The whole season my game was up and down. I was so inconsistent."

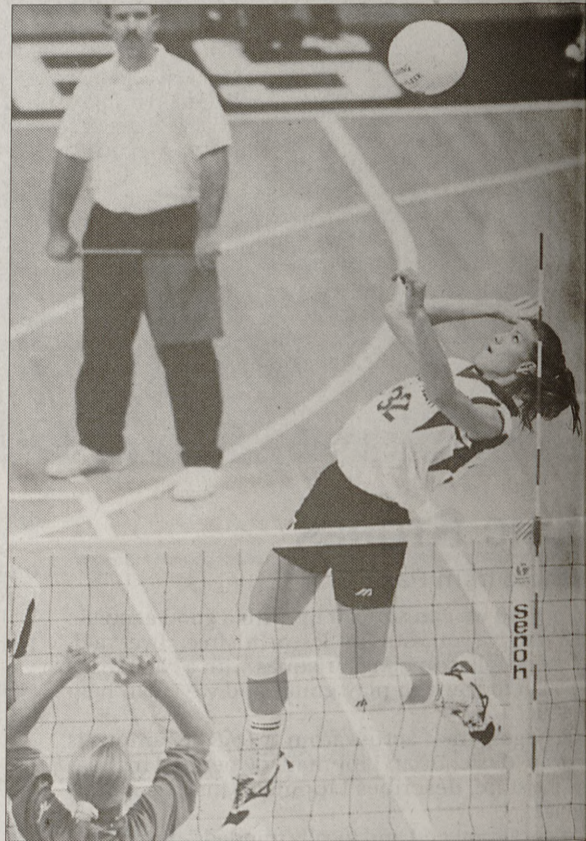
My hitting game is way improved from last year, but it could still use so much work."

All this after a year in which Sykora won the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year with a 4.01 dig average.

"When you have someone with the athletic potential that she has, there's always room to grow," Smedsrud said. "She hasn't really played volleyball that long and had that much experience before last year."

"Every time she steps on the court she is working hard and learning. Everyday she is getting better. That's really scary for opponents."

Opponents ought to pray Sykora refrains from dying her hair fish.



Junior outside hitter Stacy Sykora was named the MVP of the Georgia Invitational over the weekend.

Sports Briefs

Soccer set to play Stanford tonight

The sixth ranked Texas A&M Women's soccer team will vie for their second victory of the season as the 16th ranked Stanford Cardinals roll

into Aggeland tonight.

The 7 p.m. kickoff marks the first encounter between the two schools and only the second night game under the new lights at the Aggie Soccer complex.

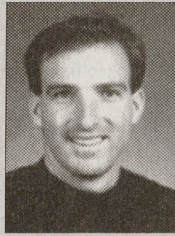
The Aggies boast an impressive 54-10-3 (.828) against non-conference opponents and a 4-1-1 (.750) record in night games.

Coming off a season opening 2-1

victory over Big 12 foe Oklahoma, A&M will face a difficult challenge in Stanford, who soundly defeated Texas 2-1 this past weekend in Austin.

Over 1,500 people are expected to attend the contest. This following a record and capacity crowd of 1,350 Saturday night against Oklahoma.

A&M will go on the road this weekend for games against Kansas and Missouri.



Guerrieri

Rose sets sights on Cooperstown

CINCINNATI (AP) — Pete Rose said Monday that he has taken a preliminary step in the process of applying for reinstatement to baseball.

Rose, who agreed to a lifetime ban for gambling in 1989, attended his son's major league debut with the

Cincinnati Reds and said afterwards that there's still no timetable for formally applying.

Rose said, however, he has talked to acting commissioner Bud Selig about the

Rose's banishment prevents him from going on the field or into the clubhouse. He bought four tickets for himself and his family and sat in the front row by the Reds' dugout next to owner Marge Schott.



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Dr. Malon Southerland, Vice President for Student Affairs, will be having luncheons this year for freshmen, upperclassmen, graduate, and transfer students at Texas A&M. The program is designed to welcome new students and have interaction about their experience at A&M. The luncheon will be held in the Memorial Student Center and will include an open-ended informal discussion and questions and answers. If you would like to attend complete this form and return to:

Dr. Southerland
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10th Floor Rudder Tower
e-mail: malon-southerland@tamu.edu

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Additionally, Homestead is participating in the Guaranteed Student Loan Program at Texas A&M and Blinn.

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